

6 THE CASTAWAYS OF THE FLAG

" Bo'sun, since our unfortunate captain was thrown into this boat with us—and that is a week ago already—it is you who have taken his place. So our lives are in your hands. Have you any hope ? "

" Have I any hope ? " John Block replied,

" Yes ! I assure you I have* I hope these infernal calms will come to an end shortly and that the wind will take us safe to harbour."

" Safe to harbour ? " the passenger answered, his eyes trying to pierce the darkness of the night.

" Well, what the deuce ! " John Block exclaimed.

There is a harbour somewhere! All we have to do is to steer for it, with the wind whistling through the yards. Good Lord! If I were the Creator I would show you half a dozen islands lying all round us, waiting our convenience ! "

" We won't ask for as many as that, bo'sun," the passenger replied, unable to refrain from smiling.

" Well," John Block answered, "if He will drive our boat towards one of those which exist already, it will be enough, and He need not make any islands on purpose, although, I must say, He seems to have been a bit stingy with

them here-
abouts !"
" But where are we ? "
•" I can't tell you, not even within a
few hundred^
miles," John Block replied. " You
know that for'